

## COUSIN AGATHA

By George Munson.

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Sylvia Blaine was happier than she had ever been in all her life before. But when one is nineteen happiness comes easily, especially when one is in love.

Tom Darragh was generally considered the most promising young lawyer in Stapleton. The Darraghs and the Blaines had been members when Stapleton was only a tiny ham-



Suddenly She Stopped.

let; old Mr. Darragh had returned to the city of his birth to end his days there, and Tom had gone into a lawyer's office. Now at twenty-seven he had a flourishing business. And he loved Sylvia Blaine.

Sylvia could not believe that it was right for any girl to be as happy as she was. And why should Tom have chosen her when there were so many sweet girls of his acquaintance? If he had ever known her cousin Agatha, for example, she was sure

that Tom would never have looked twice at her.

Agatha Blaine was five years older than Sylvia. Although she had been born in Stapleton, she had not lived there much during her checkered existence. She had made an unhappy marriage and was suing the man for a divorce. Agatha was a handsome blonde—"dashing," people called her—with any number of moths fluttering round her. And the worst of it was that Agatha, who could never resist making conquests, was coming to stay with Sylvia's mother.

How could the little country girl retain her influence over Tom when handsome, rich, citified Agatha was there?

"Why, you foolish child," said Tom laughingly, when Sylvia voiced her fears, "don't you know that I am madly infatuated with you? Bring on your Agatha and watch me."

Sylvia sighed and suffered Tom to kiss the incipient lines of trouble off her pretty forehead. But when Agatha did arrive, a resplendent being in a picture hat, with four trunks and a pedigreed dachshund, she was more than ever convinced that her days of happiness were numbered.

Agatha was so kind that the girl half minded to confess her trouble to her. But Agatha seemed also a little heartless. Sylvia was bound to confess that as she sat with her and her mother and watched the elder lady's eyebrows gradually contract as she listened to their visitor's flippant comment on men and events. But doubtless it was Agatha's unhappy matrimonial experience that was responsible for that.

"Why, my dear auntie," she said to Sylvia's mother, "what funny, old-fashioned ideas you have about men. Any woman can twist any man round her little finger, if she chooses."

"I wonder if she will choose to twist Tom round her little finger," sighed Sylvia to herself, when Agatha congratulated her warmly. Her interest in the engagement seemed almost